

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A protector sheath for a winged needle capable of accommodating a winged needle having a needle tube with a sharp blade edge, a hub firmly attached to a proximal end portion of the needle tube, and a wing provided on the hub, wherein the protector sheath comprises a cylindrical main body, at least three slits provided in a side wall of the main body and dividing the side wall into a corresponding number of sections, and wherein each of said three slits comprises a proximal end portion having a slot with a closed end and capable of accommodating the wing of the winged needle, a middle portion parallel to the axis of the main body and a curved distal end portion having a shallow V shape or an arched shape formed by a V shape or an arched shape convex portion in one of said sections and a V shape or an arched shape concave portion in an adjacent section, the proximal end portion of the slit being configured such that it receives the wing so that the needle tube of the winged needle is arranged parallel to the axis of the main body, ~~and the shallow V shape or arched shape slit of the distal end portion being arranged to extend in a direction that is not parallel to the axial direction of the main body.~~

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the proximal end portion of the slit is provided parallel to the axis of the main body.

4. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the proximal end portion of the slit constitutes only the portion where the wing is arranged when the winged-needle is accommodated in the protector sheath.

5. (original) A protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the distal end portion of the slit constitutes only the portion where the blade edge of the needle tube is arranged when the winged-needle is accommodated in the protector sheath.

6. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the slit further comprises a means capable of effecting positioning of the wing at the position where the winged needle is accommodated in the protector sheath.

7. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 6, wherein the means for positioning the wing is formed by enlarging the width of the portion of the slit where the wing is arranged.

8. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 6, wherein the means for positioning the wing is formed by a protrusion provided on a distal side of the proximal end portion of the slit where the wing is arranged.

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein a distal end portion of the slit where the slit undergoes a change in direction is formed so as to be gently curved.

11. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the main body is connected at the proximal end portion to a holder having an aperture.

12. (original) The protector sheath for a winged needle according to Claim 1, wherein the distal most end of the slit is outwardly flared.

13. (new) A protector sheath for a winged needle capable of accommodating a winged needle having a needle tube with a sharp blade edge, a hub firmly attached to a proximal end portion of the needle tube, and a wing provided on the hub, wherein the protector sheath comprises a cylindrical main body, at least three slits provided in a side wall of the main body, and wherein each of said three slits comprises a proximal end portion having a slot with a closed end and capable of accommodating the wing of the winged needle, a middle portion parallel to the axis of the main body and a curved distal end portion having a shallow V shape or an arched shape, the proximal end portion of the slit being configured such that it receives the wing so that the needle tube of the winged needle is arranged parallel to the axis of the main body, and the shallow V shape or arched shape slit of the distal end portion being arranged to extend in a direction that is not parallel to the axial direction of the main body.

14. (new) A protector sheath for a winged needle capable of accommodating a winged needle having a needle tube with a sharp blade edge, a hub firmly attached to a proximal end portion of the needle tube, and a wing provided on the hub, wherein the protector sheath comprises a cylindrical main body having a distal end and a proximal end, at least three slits provided in a side wall of the main body and opening at the distal end of the main body, and wherein each of said three slits comprises a proximal end portion having a slot with a closed end and capable of accommodating the wing of the winged needle, a middle portion parallel to the axis of the main body and a curved distal end portion on a proximal side of the opening of the slit and having a shallow V shape or an arched shape, the proximal end portion of the slit being configured such that it receives the wing so that the needle tube of the winged needle is arranged parallel to the axis of the main body, and the shallow V shape or arched shape slit of the distal end portion being arranged to extend in a direction that is not parallel to the axial direction of the main body.